

FE welcomes £270m cash injection

Eleanor Radford

@eleanorradford

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement, which announced £270m of new capital money for FE, has been celebrated as a "big win" for ministers and FE.

The pledge of extra capital funding, when added to existing resources in 2014-15, will deliver a total of £550m for college buildings over the next two years, according to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The figures, especially in times of austerity, are "a clear demonstration of the clout that both the Secretary of State, Vince Cable, and Minister for Skills, Matthew Hancock, have across Whitehall", according to sources close to the government.

The source added: "The news was a big win for BIS and for FE."

The future of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) also appeared secure, despite earlier suggestions the government would transfer its budget to the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), as recommended in Lord Heseltine's Plan for Growth.

While the agency will maintain management for the majority of the skills budget, it was confirmed that LEPs will take a leading role in managing the Employer Ownership Pilot and priorities for European Social Funding.

On releasing the Skills Funding Statement 2012-2015, the Skills Minister told *FE Week*: "The SFA will continue — as it says in the document."

And he said of the National Ap-

prenticeship Service (NAS), which was not mentioned in the funding statement: "They will continue to have a very important role."

The Association of Colleges (AoC) welcomed George Osborne's speech as a "clear note of confidence in colleges".

Chief executive Martin Doel, said: "The Autumn Statement recognises the importance of the sector to the economy, the local communities each college serves and, most importantly, to the students educated each year."

"This investment will allow colleges to continue to update their estates, helping them to deliver continuing high standards to their students, communities and industry partners."

Responding to the Skills Funding Strategy, David Hughes, chief executive of NIACE, said: "The news that, overall, the revenue funding has not been cut further than planned is welcome. The new injection of capital into FE colleges will have a quick and direct benefit to learners across the country, as will the funding of modern equipment."

Lynne Sedgmore, executive director of the 157 Group, welcomed the increased influence of LEPs. Commenting on the recommendation that colleges should be represented on LEP boards, she said: "Many of our colleges are already closely involved with LEPs and, if anything, it would have been good to see the relationship firmed up as more than a recommendation."

For a summary of the government's plans, visit www.feweek.co.uk

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Picture by Nick Linford



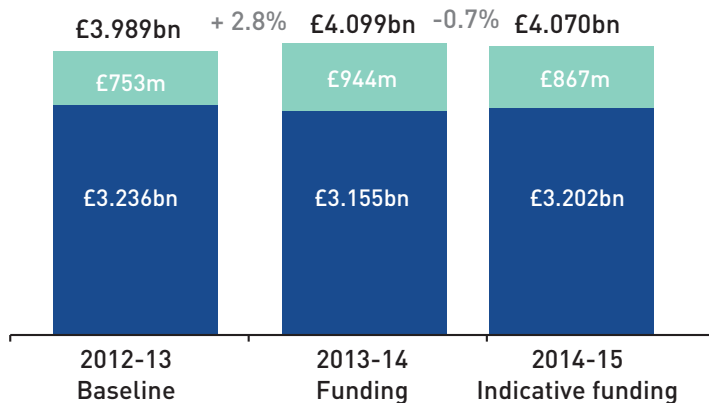
Matthew Hancock, holding the Skills Funding Statement, outside BIS offices

Investing in skills - the numbers

Skills Funding Statement BIS, December 2012

Non-teaching and learning
(incl. learner support and capital)

Teaching and learning



Monday, December 10, 2012
www.feweek.co.uk

The Tech Bacc: whose idea?



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Neil Bates profile interview



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Campus Roundup



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Top Autumn Statement tweets:

- 

@JulianGravatt
Treasury documents full of promises and instructions from the government's finance dept. On past performance a good % of these never happen
- 

@mikehopkinsmc
How is it a good day for FE with ongoing cuts and many of its students being further impoverished?
- 

@kaizenleicester
I have a feeling that the Skills budget will be underspent again in 2012/13. The removal of free 'firstness' for 24+ has affected uptake...
- 

@SheffCityRegion
Osborne's budget statement backs devolution of spending on business, transport, skills to City Regions #LEP
- 

@ukces
The Chancellor has announced that funding for Employer Ownership of Skills has increased by £90m from £250m to £340m

Learning & Skills Events,
Consultancy and Training Ltd
161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@feweek.co.uk

Richard Review angers AELP

Eleanor Radford
[@eleanorradford](https://twitter.com/eleanorradford)

A review of apprenticeships that called for workplace tax breaks has been angrily rejected by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP).

It said that Doug Richard's review of apprenticeships "created a hugely damaging picture" from its front cover illustrated with various tools to its "lack of understanding". It also said that "some of the big things are wrong" and that Richard's assertion that the report be accepted on an "all-or-nothing" basis was like a "diktat".

Richard, a former Dragons' Den investor, bit back on Twitter, dismissing the group's reaction as "self-interest".

Graham Hoyle, AELP's chief executive, said one of Richard's key recommendations — that "testing and validation process of apprenticeships should be independent and genuinely respected by industry" — particularly upset members.

"They feel disappointed, and think the review is naïve and suggests nothing radical or new."

At the heart of the Richard review was the direction for employers to pay providers directly for apprenticeship training. Tax credits, or other forms of government incentives, should then be dished out to employers.

Mr Hoyle said AELP members were espe-

cially concerned this would put off small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

"We were amazed Doug Richard suggested getting money from the taxman after the training was completed. That would be a direct cash hit on businesses and would reduce SME uptakes of apprenticeships," he said.

When the review was published, Mr Richard told FE Week his proposals were not "a laundry list" from which the government could pick the elements that it wanted.

But Mr Hoyle said: "We have always said that options should be available to employers, but not a sole, no-choice diktat."

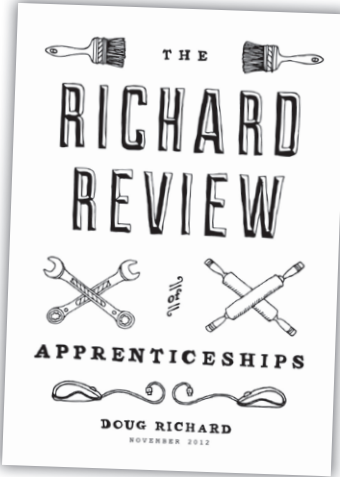
"Our rejection, however, is not based solely on this ultimatum," he said.

"It starts with the cover, which displays a stereotypical view of traditional basic craft occupations as the depiction of apprenticeships. This is a hugely damaging picture that both ignores the current reality regarding apprenticeships and dangerously misinforms

everyone about the future breadth and use of apprenticeships."

He said the review's other proposals built upon existing AELP policy such as the group's belief that apprenticeships must be available for "all-age" employees and that they should not be restricted to level 3 and above.

Doug Richard tweeted in response: "Angry at me are you. A number of @aelp assertions sound suspiciously like self-interest not rational discourse to me."



New FE Guild chair looks to technology

Eleanor Radford
[@EleanorRadford](https://twitter.com/EleanorRadford)

The chair of the FE Guild steering group has revealed to FE Week why he would make it an "important priority" to support teachers to become more "technologically literate".

David Hughes said there hadn't been enough investment and focus in FE on technology such as video lectures and the use of apps in the classroom — and discouraging the use of smartphones in the classroom was "archaic".

Mr Hughes, the chief executive of NIACE and the chair of the FE Guild steering group, a new, single body being created to set professional standards and codes of behaviour in FE, was speaking from a NIACE and BBC Innovating Learning conference in Salford.

"We think there is an untouched potential around use of technology and learning in FE, which, if used more creatively and innovatively, will help improve the learning experience," he said.

"It's about making it more exciting, more interesting and embedding the use of technology in a way that people will get used to so when they go out into society and the working world

they'll be better prepared."

He said he wasn't talking about aids such as electronic whiteboards but video lecturing and apps that allowed students to access information in and out of the classroom. He cited Massive Open Online Classes (MOOCs) as a successful example — in the US, 100,000 people tuned in to hear a MOOC about artificial intelligence, he said.

"If by doing video lectures rather than physical lectures we can get to 100 people rather than 20 at the same time, that is a fantastic result," he said.

"As resources are reduced per learner it's important that the resources available are targeted in enhancing the learning experience."

"The savings mean practitioners could spend more time with learners who need extra support."

The big issue was how to persuade FE leaders that investing in the use of technology would improve the learning experience. "The guild should play an important part in this," he said.

"The benefit is about learners being empowered, about being able to direct their own learning. That is why it's so exciting — learners can learn in their own time and in their own ways and not be reliant on teachers. And technology

FE Week news in brief

ALW nominations

Do you know an adult who deserves recognition for their outstanding achievement in learning?

NIACE is calling for nominations for Adult Learners' Week Awards 2013. The accolades are for people who have used learning to help transform their lives. There are also awards for innovative projects for adults. The deadline for nominations is at 5pm on December 13.

To nominate visit www.alw.org.uk/learning-awards or call the NIACE Adult Learners' Week Team on 0116 204 4200.

Apprenticeship Week

A toolkit has been launched to help people better understand National Apprenticeship Week.

The National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has produced a document that lists speakers, events, ideas, a guide to social media and much more, that can be downloaded for free in preparation for the event to be held on March 11-15 next year.

National Apprenticeship Week celebrates apprenticeships and the positive impact they have on individuals and businesses, NAS said.

To access the toolkit visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk/

Charter consultation

A consultation has been launched by the Skills Minister on the issue of chartered status for FE institutions.

Matthew Hancock is consulting with education and training providers to develop the concept that will help institutions celebrate their success, build their reputation and status, and gain recognition for what they have achieved within their communities, the agency said.

You can express your views on the consultation, which runs until 16 January next year, at www.bis.gov.uk



David Hughes at the Innovating Learning conference

could enable more peer support for students created by online networks."

He said he believed qualifications such as Mozilla Open Badges, obtained free through online learning, might mean something to employers in the future and that the sector should welcome them.

He added: "This isn't about cutting jobs — it's about getting teachers involved with technology so they can feel more empowered themselves to get better learning happening."

A search for the top maths apps and app developers was launched at the conference.

Hoyle wants schools 'penalised'

Andrew Mourant

Schools where pupils fail to reach A to C standard in GCSE maths and English should be penalised by having some of their funding denied, says a training provider expert.

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), says that schools should be subject to the same conditions as training companies that have 25 per cent of their money held back until an apprenticeship has been completed and signed off.

Withholding part of pupil funding would "up the level of success" in schools, he told *FE Week*.

"Payment by results is an incentive to give people a satisfactory end product. If we don't get it right, it costs us.

"Secondary schools are charged with giving people a certain level of education. Why aren't they incentivised or penalised if they don't?

"Where it doesn't, we think that the money should be reinvested but given to

training providers who have to do the remedial work," he said.

"We deal with a large numbers of school-leavers who have insufficient levels of English, maths and employability skills."

Grades A to C in maths and English should be expected of all pupils other than those with special needs – "schools need to get 90 per cent of the cohort to this standard," he said.

The same funding formula should apply if schools failed to turn out pupils with "employability skills", although this would be more difficult to implement.

Mr Hoyle has raised the idea with Department for Education officials who, he said, found the logic "difficult to argue against". Some Liberal Democrat politicians — he refused to name them — have also shown "very real interest".

Russell Hobby, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said it was a "ridiculous" idea. "Taking away some of the resources of a school struggling with standards will make it struggle even more."

Brian Lightman, general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), said: "Treating schools like naughty children will reduce their capacity to get more children through to a higher level of competence.

"We should be investing resources to give them help and support – we need to get away from the idea that schools and teachers are the problem. Payment by results belongs to the Victorian era."

According to the Association of Colleges (AoC), almost 150,000 16 to 18-year-olds study at pre-GCSE level in colleges where "the majority have to go back to basics, and need a lot of help and encouragement to gain qualifications in incremental stages".

Cathy Walsh, principal of Barking and Dagenham College, told *FE Week*: "It's good that Graham is being radical — it's an interesting idea for the money to follow the learner and supporting young people to gain that level 2 benchmark.

"Colleges are already delivering this for young people. However, we aren't running GCSE repeats, but other qualifications such as functional skills competence at level 2

that applies to English and maths.

"We need a more innovative curriculum and to assess the exam system. Having youngsters keep on redoing GCSEs reinforces a sense of failure — putting them through the same hoops doesn't work."

Social Market Foundation director Ian Mulheirn said Hoyle's view "definitely had something", but he questioned its practicality and fairness.

"I think in principle he's right, but it would seem unfair that if schools were improving, and had taught a difficult group and moved them forward, they didn't get properly rewarded.

"A system should be value added rather than absolute — if it isn't, schools in more deprived areas will get their funding cut."

He considered Hoyle's 90 per cent target "absolutely right" but said standards could be driven up by "much more powerful regulation".

"If they weren't being met, being able to kick out the management and get in new people — rather than cutting funding — might have the same effect."

VAT plans will dent adult apprenticeships

Eleanor Radford

@eleanorradford

Training experts say adults will be put off apprenticeships after the government announcement that training providers must charge VAT on new FE loans.

Chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), Graham Hoyle, pictured right, said the charges would have a "serious impact" on higher apprenticeships.

The charge, which Mr Hoyle expects will be about 20 per cent, will be introduced as part of the "24-plus advanced learning loan" scheme next year, but will not affect learners studying at general FE colleges.

"The current position is very unsatisfactory because it is bound to have a serious impact on the number of adults entering the apprenticeship programme next year," Mr Hoyle said.

"The government's ambitions to see more higher apprenticeships will be badly affected. The skills minister has been made aware of this and he has given AELP an assurance that further deliberations will continue in tandem with the current consultation on VAT on higher education."

In their latest online update, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and HMRC confirmed that no changes will be made to the VAT treatment of further education for 2013/14.

It said: "It has not been possible to find a solution that would deal with the issues associated with the introduction of loans in isolation, without considering the VAT treatment of further education as a whole.



"The agency, BIS and HMRC are aware of issues raised by some commercial training organisations about the impact that the VAT rules would have on them. BIS and HMRC will continue working together to consider these issues.

"The 24-plus Advanced Learning Loans Policy Overview and FAQ have been updated to reflect this decision."

FE Week first reported the imminent charge in June. At the time, Martin Doel, chief executive of the Association of Colleges (AoC), said that colleges, universities and schools operated on different "playing fields" to private providers.

He argued that general FE colleges were different in particular because they were not-for-profit and served their local community. Mr Doel said that if independent training providers wanted to operate on a par with colleges they would need to accept accountability to their local community.

Gordon Marsden, shadow FE minister, told *FE Week* the problem was because of the different legal statuses held by colleges and independent training providers. However, he later admitted there was "nothing immediately that can be done".



Work Readiness with NCFE

These not to be missed 1 day conferences, confront the key issues that affect colleges, training organisations, and their learners. They are free to attend and aimed at senior staff and curriculum planners, providing an update on our ever evolving portfolio of qualifications developed to meet the needs of today's learners.

We have some excellent speakers confirmed:

York
30/01/2013

Nick Linford - Managing Director of Lsect and FE Week will give a funding and policy update, packing you full of advice.

Birmingham
12/02/2013

Carl Gibson - Commercial Director at ForSkills Ltd will demonstrate how ForSkills resources can support your delivery of Functional Skills and improve achievement rates. These resources are free when delivering NCFE Functional Skills.

London
01/03/2013

NCFE's Business Development Managers will outline how NCFE's qualifications can support the Study Programme and priorities faced by the 16-19 market.

Programme timings:

The event will begin at 11am with 2 breakout sessions (see these below). Lunch is 12-1pm and the afternoon programme will begin at 1pm. We hope to close by 4pm.

For more information go to:
www.ncfe.org.uk and click on 'NCFE Events'

Breakout 1: NCFE Functional Skills with ForSkills

Breakout 2: Work readiness with NCFE - examining employability qualifications and solutions for all ages, including pre 16, 16-19, 19+ and unemployed.

Editor's comment

A relatively good day

The Autumn Statement could have gone either way.

FE's new minister was formerly an adviser to the Chancellor so would he help swing the axe or use his relationship to soften the blow?

When the Treasury announced £270m of new money, and an overall 2.8 per cent increase in total Government spending on further education and skills, we had our answer.

This capital investment is a vote of confidence in our colleges, and for that the new minister should be commended.

I know FE and Skills is still having to swallow the deficit reduction pill, with a top line real term reduction in funding of 25.1 per cent by 2014-15.

Ok sure, the extra £270m does not anywhere near meet past capital budget plans for FE.

And the new strategic role of Local Enterprise Partnerships will present challenges (although it's better than Heseltine's proposal to just hand them the funding and systems).

But all-in-all, in the current climate, it was a relatively good day for FE and skills.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

We love a regular cryptic challenge at *FE Week*. We reserve a few column inches every week on the back page to provide you with a gloriously tough Sudoku. But in last week's edition there were two cryptic challenges.

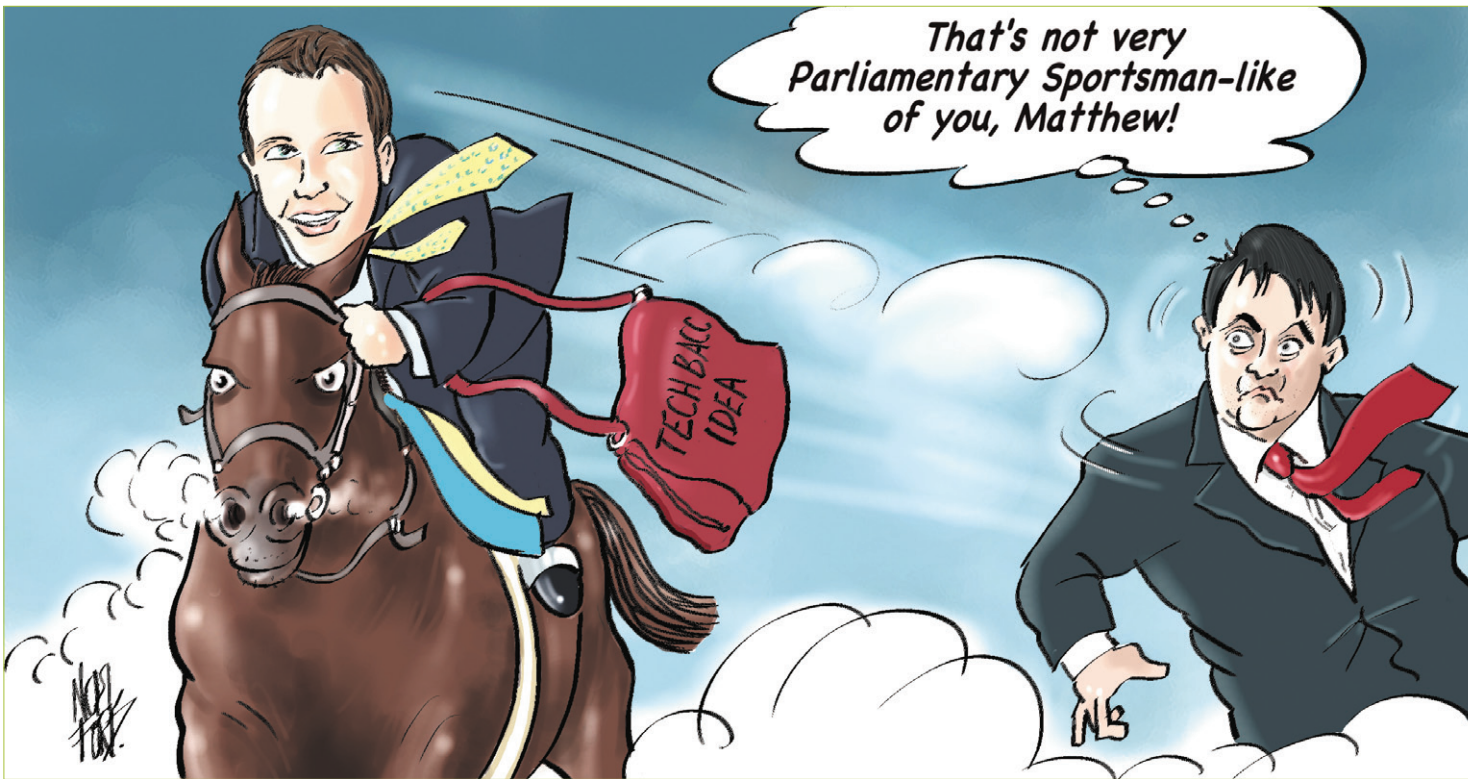
Whilst the Sudoku had some of you number crunching, our campus round-up from one "south coast college" cooked up a storm by leaving readers trying to guess the college referred to.

The editing of this piece was a little overcooked and sadly the college name was hooked from the article.

It was, of course, South Devon College that has opened a delicious seafood academy on the south coast and we wish them the best of luck!

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.



Twigg: You've snatched our Tech Bacc

Holly Welham
[@hollywelham](#)

The Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Stephen Twigg, has accused Skills Minister Matthew Hancock of "stealing the idea for a Technical Baccalaureate".

During a parliamentary exchange Mr Hancock responded saying: "I am absolutely delighted by the positive tone coming from the Opposition . . . the Tech Bacc, as suggested by Lord Adonis, a man for whom the Government has huge respect, is one of the things that we will do to ensure higher quality occupational and vocational qualifications and more respect for them. I look forward to consulting widely and will set out more details in due course."

The Department for Education announced last month that it would consult on the details of a Tech Bacc, and publish a list of courses that will qualify next year.

Approved courses are expected to involve a high degree of external assessment rather than tutor marking.

The Association of Colleges (AoC) has called on the government to work with the Labour party on the new qualifications, which are

expected to be available from September 2014.

"It would be good if all three major political parties were able to work together to ensure commonality in their proposals," said Martin Doel, the association's chief executive.

"In this way we might have some prospect of a proposal that will stand the test of time, help students achieve the best that they can and not go the way of diplomas, NVQs or the other previous 'new' ideas in vocational education."

He added that it was unsurprising employers, parents and students did not understand vocational education when changes were made so regularly to qualifications and systems.

Mr Twigg told *FE Week* that Coalition support for the idea was "good", but its plans looked half-hearted.

"While pupils under Labour would have the chance to start a Tech Bacc from 14, and be able to switch between academic and practical courses, the government's Tech Bacc looks like an afterthought for those who haven't passed Michael Gove's much derided EBacc at 16."

In an interview with *FE Week*, Mr Hancock was asked about the potential for cross-party consensus.

"My approach will be very consultative. There are a number of different proposals

already on the table and I'll want to consult widely," he said.

The proposals include plans to present A level and vocational data separately on performance tables from January 2014. Minimum standards for school sixth forms, sixth-form colleges and further education colleges would also be introduced.

"Far too little genuinely occupational education takes place among 16 to 18-year-olds. In the coming weeks we will publish a consultation on how to identify those with the highest value," he said.

Judith Norrington, group director of policy and research at City & Guilds, told *FE Week*: "We strongly believe vocational achievements should be given prominence alongside academic qualifications – this notion is, in fact, long overdue. We created a technological baccalaureate many years ago with this in mind.

"However, if we are to encourage and engage those people who need it most, especially as the raising the participation age policy comes into force, we must ensure we have the utmost confidence in the way qualifications are considered for performance tables and that the ranking process is entirely fit for purpose."

Comments

AELP members respond to Richard Review with 'anger'

AELP repeats its mantra that the content should be "controlled" by the employer. Training individuals for a specific employer's needs can have the effect of 'locking them in' to that employer and reduces the number of transferable skills that would enable the individual to improve themselves.

George Layfield

Panel sets out to define FE Guild

Why is money being wasted on yet another bureaucratic organisation? Because we have another useless government in power. What actual benefits will the guild deliver? I can't

see any. Is this organisation even needed? No, it is not needed. Let FE be run by colleges, not bureaucrats.

FE Lecturer

Of course one of the key tasks of the project will be to address concerns [raised in previous comment from an FE lecturer]: is the Guild needed; do the sector want it; can we show value for money; and how can we really make it owned by the sector, so that colleges and other providers do decide what the Guild does and make sure it works for them?

The Department have made it clear that if the providers do not want the Guild, it will not happen and they are not imposing it on us.

Peter Davies, project leader of FE Guild consultation, Association of Colleges

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Or, you can write to us at *FE Week*, 161-165 Greenwich High Road, London SE10 8JA.

Full contact details should be provided and can be withheld by *FE Week* upon request.

FE Week profile

Neil Bates ~ his story

Holly Welham

@hollywelham

The chief executive of Prospects Learning Foundation talks to FE Week

When he was 24 Neil Bates was married and wanting to start a family. He saw decades of job security ahead of him at the civil service where he'd been for two years securing providers to retrain the unemployed. But there was something missing: the chance to make a real difference.

So, spotting a job running a £3m government programme to train people for employment, he gave up that security and became general manager of Estuary Training in Southend, Essex.

It was a rocky start. His office was a classroom at a local college, he had one member of staff — and no idea what type of training he should deliver.

But, nearly 25 years later, the company has grown into the education and skills charity Prospects Learning Foundation. And he's been its chief executive for 15 years.

At the end of its first year the organisation had one centre, 12 staff and 80 apprentices. It now has five centres, 250 staff, 2,000 students and a turnover of £11m.

"It felt enormously risky," the 49-year-old says now of his decision as a 24-year-old. "My father gave me the lecture of all lectures about my pension and job security, but it was unquestionably the right decision.

"I was frustrated by the civil service's age and time-based approach to developing people. I had ambitions to become a higher executive officer and in my performance review my manager said, good Lord, it took me 15 years to get there. It wasn't going to matter how hard I worked."

Becoming a general manager at 24, however, was a big leap.

"Frankly, I had no idea at all how to manage people. I had to try to establish credibility pretty fast, because I was dealing with people who were far more experienced than I was. I grew up very quickly — it taught me not to try to impose authority over capability."

Bates was brought up in Torpoint, South West Cornwall, with his three sisters, Jackie, Alison and Gill, and brother Mark.

"Mum was a remarkable lady," he says. "She brought up five kids almost single-handedly, as my dad was away with the Navy as a chief petty officer, while working full-time as an English teacher. She also had a disability caused by the curvature of the spine from contracting polio in her early 20s."

The father of Philip, 23, and Anthony, 21, says in the 1960s people in his area followed two routes.

"One was to go in the Navy dockyard at Plymouth and the other was to go into agriculture, or some other semi-skilled employment," he says.

"There was no university within 50 miles and very little access to further education. The culture was very much that you left school at 16 and went straight into work. There was little aspiration in terms of doing anything else.

"I wasn't particularly academic. I thought school was somewhere to go to meet your mates rather than to study. I wasn't interested in applying myself ... the teachers had decided how I was going to behave, and so I lived up to it."

But when he was 13, his father left the Navy to retrain as a social worker and the family moved to Essex. In the West Country he had been in special needs' sets for some subjects, but his parents told his new school that he'd been in the top groups.

"This was in the day when schools didn't share information, so I was placed in top sets. The school knew nothing about my background and had a completely different set of expectations. It had a big impact on me; I left school with good A levels," he says.

"I didn't come from a deprived background, but once you're in the education system it's very difficult to change expectations and the outcome. It's only because we moved somewhere new that I got the grades I did.

"It's why we spend very little time at the foundation worrying about what our students have done at school. We know that if you put young people in a different environment that's more practical than academic you can get a transformational change — we've had teachers come here and simply not be able to believe how their students are behaving, because at school they would be running around the corridors."

“Frankly, I had no idea at all how to manage people”

He'd been chief executive at Prospects for four years when, in 2000, he decided that it was time to take a risk and create something that would have a really big impact.

He set his sights on a new regional college for skills in Southend, raising £14m for the project. But before plans went ahead in 2006 he found out about Thorpe Bay, a secondary school in the area that was due to close after years in special measures.

Plans for the new college were put on hold and the charity invested the £14m, raising another £8m, in creating Futures Community College for 11 to 19-year-olds on Thorpe Bay's site. It's the first institution of its kind in England and, as well as providing GCSEs and A levels, also offers vocational training.

"It felt like a really brave thing to do," says Bates, who lives in Benfleet, Essex. "In no



way was it an easy option. There were groups of people who said it shouldn't be done — that the kids should just be distributed to schools in the area. People also thought it could be a distraction from what we were doing as a training provider . . . and then there were a whole mass of structural issues. But it's one of the things that I'm most proud of."

He hopes the college will be good in two years, outstanding in five.

In the past five years Prospects has invested £46m in new buildings and equipment. Its five centres train young people in a range of skills — from aviation engineering and carpentry to hairdressing and construction.

This month it opened a new £10m centre in Basildon dedicated to skills for building services, such as plumbing. In March next year a green technology training centre will be unveiled.

"It's a privilege doing something that makes a difference," he says. "Looking back at how the charity has grown makes me feel in awe of everything that's happened. I hope that in five years we have a network of centres across the South East."

With nearly 25 years at the charity under his belt, he's looking to build on his work on national policy — he's currently a trustee at education charity, the Edge Foundation.

"There's a desperate need to look again at how we procure education and skills in this country," he says. "There should be substantial investment in re-establishing the technical skills provision that we had until the 1980s. And a proper pre-apprenticeship

programme is seriously needed."

He would also raise the school leaving age to 18 and give vocational and academic choices to students at 14.

But the most important thing, he says, is to properly raise the status of technical vocational education.

"The labelling of lots of workforce programmes at level 2 in retail and customer services damages the apprenticeship brand. I would split it and have traineeships at level 2 and apprenticeships at level 3."

It's a personal thing

What's your favourite book?
The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists by Robert Tressell

What did you want to be when you were younger?
A journalist or a lawyer

What do you do to switch off from work?
It's difficult to switch off but I love to cook and I have recently taken up golf

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?
My late father so that I could say all the things that remained unsaid

What would your super power be?
The power to make people be nicer to each other

FE Week experts – responding to Richard Review of Apprenticeships

Let's value technical education

The CBI welcomes the Richard Review on apprenticeships, says Neil Carberry. But any shift to a new system will have to be carefully managed so that it does not undermine existing provision and opportunities

One of the constant cries from the FE sector is that it is too often forgotten by ministers who invest political capital in primary and secondary education at the expense of skills; and that when they do engage, it often brings sudden, wild shifts in policy.

Yet apprenticeships are the most stable, historic and successful forms of education that we have.

Dating back to the Middle Ages, they were developed by the ancient guilds as a contract between master craftsmen and workers, who would get formal training, food and lodging, in exchange for their labour.

Most apprentices would then become master craftsmen themselves and would train the next generation.

Yet as Doug Richard sets out in his review, this simple structure has become far too complex, with rules and regulations that fail to meet the needs of either learners or businesses.

He is absolutely right when he says that there is “universal agreement that apprenticeships are a good thing”. He is also right when he says that true apprenticeships must

be employer-led and meet tough industry standards.

There are many excellent schemes that are many times oversubscribed, as with the outstanding, long-established courses at Rolls-Royce, BAE Systems and BT. These provide exactly the sort of high-level skills and hard workplace experience that drive growth.

But apprenticeships must be about the wider economy too — higher skills in retail or logistics are just as important.

“The road to apprenticeships does not simply start at 16”

The development of a higher apprenticeship programme for accountancy over the past couple of years, for instance, highlights this potential and offers a great route to a professional career.

But we should be honest that this is far from being universally the case. So we welcome Richard's stark challenge for government: to urgently overhaul the system so that it properly values technical education.

The world's economy is changing and apprenticeships need to keep pace. As the economy rebalances towards high-value exports and a more flexible, mobile labour market, our training system must shift to meet these needs.

But shifting to a new system will have to be carefully managed so that it does not undermine existing provision and opportunities.

And we would caution against dismissing the value of shorter courses, based on teaching level 2 skills — these can be rigorous and really meet employers' needs.

Overall businesses will welcome the central thrust of Richard's recommendations.

First, it puts employers in the driving seat. They must have a greater say in both course design and targeting funding at training that matches their needs and future job opportunities.

Second, layers of red tape and confusing funding streams need to be swept away. They put off many firms taking on apprentices — particularly small and medium-sized businesses.

And third, the proposed skills tax credit to take on apprentices could finally make the employer, not government, the decision-maker in apprenticeship design.

But a broader point needs to be made. The road to apprenticeships does not simply start at 16 — the aptitudes and attitudes must be inbuilt from much earlier.



That's why the CBI is calling for a radical overall from nursery onwards. We want clear routes into technical education at an earlier age and a shift away from public exams at 16.

And we want tougher, new vocational A levels at 18 and for all students to study English and maths throughout school and college.

This is a key moment for government and businesses to step up to the plate — and we are ready to play our part.

Neil Carberry is education and skills director at the Confederation of British Industry

Supporting employer incentives

There is much to welcome in the Richard Review (although paper exams should stay and employers should not design new qualifications on their own), says Sally Hunt of the University and Colleges Union

The Richard Review's emphasis on an apprenticeship being a form of education to be held in high regard and its efforts to define a modern apprenticeship must be applauded.

The complete failings of the Work Programme (described by David Cameron as the biggest and boldest programme since the Great Depression) reinforced how important it is to ensure high-quality training.

We are pleased the review recognises the innovative work already being done by colleges with employers, and agree there needs to be a clearer definition of exactly what constitutes an apprenticeship with industry-specific targets for young people to achieve.

We also welcome the recognition that there are three parties to an apprenticeship — the apprentice, the employer and government.

It is helpful that Richard makes the point that the apprentice should be the key beneficiary. With that in mind, we would have liked a commitment that apprentices be more involved in determining vital elements such as curriculum, delivery and assessment. We have heard plenty from the employers and government over the years; it would be good to hear from the learners.

We have long called for stronger incentives

for employers and believe that the review's proposal for government funding for apprenticeships to be routed through National Insurance or tax system would get more on board.

“If they don't spend the money as they should, then it goes to those employers that will”

We need firmer action to ensure employers actually do something with the large amounts of public money they are given. There needs to be a carrot and stick approach: the carrot is the funding that they receive . . . the stick is legislation to make sure that money is used for training. Put simply, if they don't spend the money as they should, then it goes to those employers that will.

We do not believe employers should be designing qualifications alone. The job should

be led by the experts. The employers' views are, of course important, but designing qualifications is not a simple task.

Similarly, we do not see competition as an effective approach to the design of new qualifications, when we have existing qualifications bodies set up to do that very job.

Introducing such a system is taking the idea of the market too far for even the most ardent free marketeer. It has the potential to damage fatally the qualification infrastructure with unsuccessful awarding bodies losing their expertise and potentially withdrawing from the market.

We do agree with some of the elements around assessment. Assessors should be external and neutral, for instance, although we cannot sanction the complete removal of paper exams. The understanding of the theory needs to be demonstrated as well as acquiring the skills.

As Richard identifies, off-site learning adds real value and should be reflected in assessment. There is also the issue of fees for over-24s. More apprenticeships are a good thing but, as well as being of high quality, they must be accessible to all.

Asking those aged 24 or more to pay up to £4,000 a year to work as an apprentice is likely to act as a deterrent. It also reneges on the tripartite system of sharing the cost that Richard identifies as the right way to fund apprenticeships.

Finally, the challenge will be to ensure



that the review's call to raise quality also addresses the pay and exploitation of some young apprentices. Currently one in five does not receive the statutory minimum wage and some find themselves on sub-standard schemes where employers simply use them as a cheap source of labour. This must be stamped out.

Sally Hunt is general secretary of the University and Colleges Union

FE Week Experts

FE: Your flexible friend

Shadow education minister Karen Buck took some flak at the AoC annual conference for suggesting colleges may not be ready for direct enrolment at age 14. Here she explains why there is a risk of a two-tier system

That FE colleges can play a positive, indeed transformational role in the education of 14 to 16-year-olds is not in doubt. FE has a critical part to play if we are to introduce genuine flexibility into education at 14-plus; a flexibility that enables students to achieve through paths other than the traditional school environment and/or academic curriculum (and, indeed, back again).

Until now, the most common form of full-time college provision for this age group has been for pupils unlikely to complete a key stage 4 programme at school. They may be truanting, at risk of exclusion or simply failing to manage on academic courses.

Others may be on ESOL programmes as new arrivals to the UK. Many have gained a great deal from taking a predominantly work-related programme and from the more adult atmosphere of a college. But they have been in a small minority and, inevitably, their impact on the college ethos has been modest.

It may be that direct enrolment will mean a change in funding and management arrangements and little change in numbers. It seems more likely, however, that an increase in numbers will follow and details are eagerly

anticipated. However, we know enough to allow us to make some assessment of the opportunities and risks for colleges.

First it is likely, as predicted by the Wolf report, that students making the transfer to FE will be lower achievers. They are likely to come with more than their fair share of learning and behavioural issues, ones that are by no means always well-addressed within the school system.

“This government has consistently downgraded work-related and practical learning”

It is essential that the funding that colleges receive is adequate to meet the needs of these challenging pupils. They will also need to be confident that managing a greater number of such students will not undermine the more adult ethos that has characterised colleges.

Colleges will also need to be sure that they offer an appropriate curriculum. Wolf recommended - and the government accepted - that vocational courses should only take up 20 per cent of curriculum time for students under 16. Colleges will, of course, be gearing up to

deliver the English Baccalaureate subjects, amongst others, and in so doing will assess how attractive and successful their provision is when the vocational aspect of the curriculum is so much more limited.

Everyone involved will carefully evaluate the impact of a free market in provision at 14. Might there be reduced collaboration between schools and colleges if a competitive market for 14 to 16-year-olds emerges?

Schools are likely to resist the loss of their abler students but will perhaps encourage those less likely to contribute to performance targets to make the transfer.

There could be a real risk of a two-tier system, with schools focusing on abler pupils and colleges being expected to pick up lower attainers.

Yet direct enrolment is unlikely to work unless there is real partnership between schools, colleges and local authorities. Colleges will also have to engage fully with local systems for admissions, exclusions and special educational needs, and be supported in return.

These challenges can be met over time, but a period of transition has to be negotiated first. And this is against a backdrop of an education finance squeeze and where, for example, even the physical infrastructure of some colleges may not lend itself to a rapid change in the age profile of students.

This government has consistently downgraded work-related and practical learning,



Karen Buck speaking at the AoC annual conference

promoting EBacc as the only path to success.

Labour wants a much stronger vocational pathway with an appropriately enhanced role for colleges in delivering it. But we believe this should be achieved by strengthening local planning and partnerships, not by a simplistic free market approach.

Karen Buck is Shadow Minister for Education

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Better late than never

In 2009, while working at Lewisham College, Nick Linford, now editor of *FE Week*, wrote an article published in *FE Focus*, promoting a system that offered provider incentives for progression and outcomes such as going to university or into work. In the past few weeks both Ofsted and the government have come out strongly in favour of doing just that. Here we reprint his article from three years ago

The end of another teaching year brings with it a welcome summer break for many staff and learners in further education.

However, the story does not end here for the 2008/09 academic year since learners will be eagerly awaiting the results of their hard work, and they won't be alone.

Colleges are now busy recording and verifying learner qualification outcomes, keeping a watchful eye on how success rates compare with last year, and on targets and national benchmarks.

Success-rate statistics seem a long way from the classroom, but as a percentage of learners that started and ultimately achieved their qualification, they act as a critical performance measure. They are used in Ofsted inspection reports to inform grades, Minimum Levels of Performance to decommission provision, Framework for Excellence to commission provision, and most recently the funding methodology itself for setting allocations. Is it any wonder that success rates get so much attention and can cause so much fear?

In fact, further education providers have made hitting success rate targets a bit of a habit. When Labour came to power in 1997, just over half (53 per cent) of all learners that started a qualification passed. Each year since, this figure has risen, and in 2007/08 just over four out of five completed and achieved their qualification (80.2 per cent), exceeding the 2010/11 target three years early. With the introduction of shorter programmes as part of the Qualification and Credit Framework, this upward trend is likely to continue.

The problem with success rates as a performance measure is that they only count qualifications. At Lewisham College, learners join our courses seeking outcomes such as progression to university, gaining a sustainable job and acquiring skills that make a positive difference in the workplace. Qualifications, programmes or pathways of learning should be designed with

these outcomes in mind, and providers should gain recognition when a learner achieves their intended progression or destination.

There are a limited number of courses for young people and adults delivered by further education providers which do use learner progression and destination performance measures. The Entry to Employment (E2E) programme for 16 to 18-year-olds was introduced in 2003/04 and includes financial incentives for a positive progression, such as into further training or work.

“Recording and rewarding progression and destination outcomes should be extended to all 14-19, adult and employer provision”

There are also a few relatively new and potentially short-term funding streams for adults, such as Skills for Jobs and the Six Month Offer. Both these programmes include targets and financial reward for progression into sustainable jobs with further training.

This approach to recording and rewarding progression and destination outcomes should be extended to all 14-19, adult and employer provision. It would require the recording of both the main intended and actual destination for all learners, which would be used to calculate conversion rates for types of progression and destination.

The intended and actual outcomes for the employer should also be recorded, such as raising productivity. To incentivise high conversion rates they could come with financial rewards, either within the relevant funding

formula or as part of national commissioning frameworks. Recording and publishing these conversion rates would also help the public and the relevant government agency to really understand the effectiveness of the learning.

Introducing a new performance monitoring regime is not usually easy, something to which anyone involved in Framework for Excellence will testify. To be successful it usually requires significant consultation, training and determination to use the information gathered effectively.

Perhaps most importantly, the collection of data and related measurements need to be simple to understand and robust enough for everyone to have confidence in. This may not be easy, but has there ever been a better time to have the debate?

More further education qualifications is not the pure answer

First, the recession cannot be reversed simply by the delivery of more qualifications. Unemployment has risen by a record 281,000 since May and by 753,000 over the year, reaching 2.38 million in total. To reverse this trend we are using new and well-established links with employers to understand their requirements and deliver the right skills to learners when and where vacancies arise.

In this context the successful outcome from any training should be progression into employment. In a target and performance culture obsessed by qualification outcomes there is a risk that progression into work is lost sight of and that the completion of a qualification could even delay entry to work.

Second, existing target and performance measures are being reviewed and will be changing. These include harmonising success rate calculations with schools and the demand-led funding, a new Ofsted inspection framework and the inclusion of performance indicators such as destination surveys within the Framework for Excellence.



Also, when the Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency take the reins from April 2010 they are likely to be asked by their masters to measure investment in further education, at a time of public sector cuts, in new ways.

A target and performance monitoring regime with progression and destination at its core would help us to not only recognise outcomes in addition to qualifications but also help potential learners make informed judgements.

Learners gaining skills to progress into employment will want to know how successful respective providers are at progressing learners into work. Similarly, a learner planning to go into higher education will want to know which providers are most successful in achieving this intended outcome. Ultimately, we want to ensure every learner has the best possible experience, not all of which will be associated with the achievement of a qualification.

While recognising that success rates and qualifications are very important, they must not become a distraction at the expense of other valuable outcomes. New performance-based regimes that reward outcomes based on positive progression and destinations would put the spotlight on our contribution to the learner journey where, especially at the moment, it really matters.

Nick Linford writing in 2009

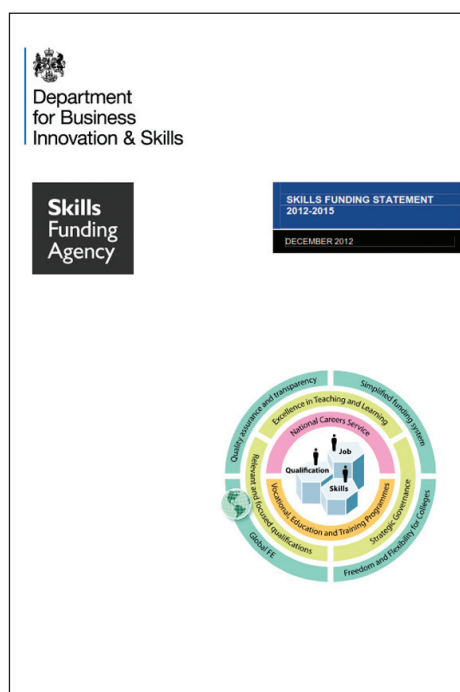
BIS Skills Funding Statement

We want to encourage providers to offer training which helps people into employment. We will therefore work with partners, including DWP and the sector, to ensure that there is an appropriate system to capture information about job outcomes for unemployed learners in the months after their training finishes.

We will use existing sources of data wherever possible.

Ensuring we have robust and reliable data on how many unemployed people enter

and stay in work after training will support any future policy development on job outcome payments and incentives.



Published December 2012

Ofsted annual report

Providers have not focused enough on measuring the true impact of their provision. Rising proportions of young people are completing their courses and achieving their qualifications, but, at the same time, unemployment is rising.

Many adult and community learning providers have developed particularly good expertise in developing provision in deprived areas.

However, senior management teams across the sector need to develop the capacity to be genuinely forward-looking, focus on matching their provision to local needs, and measure the longer-term benefits of their provision for their learners.

Leaders therefore need to focus more on the usefulness of qualifications to learners and not on the quantity of qualifications achieved. Even in the good and outstanding colleges, senior managers and governors have prioritised the

achievement of individual qualifications as an indicator of success.

There has been insufficient attention paid to how well these qualifications help learners achieve their career and employment goals. This is not surprising: the incentives largely ignore the progress made by learners and the value that post-16 provision adds.

Incentives and funding systems need to change. Providers need the freedom to adapt to local needs and circumstances, but they also need the right incentives.

At the moment, funding largely follows participation and completion of courses. In the future, it needs to incentivise an increased focus on learners' development in relation to their starting points, their progression to further training and subsequent employment or their progress within work.

Published November 2012

College Ofsted grade update

General Further and Tertiary Education College	Inspection Grade (new CIF)	Inspection date	Previous inspection grade	Inspection date	Total increase or decrease
Cambridge Regional College	2	22-Oct-12	2	10-Mar-08	0
South Worcestershire College	4	23-Oct-12	3	25-Jan-10	-1
Bicton College	2	16-Oct-12	3	24-Feb-09	1
South Tyneside College	2	15-Oct-12	3	05-Oct-09	1
City College Plymouth	2	01-Oct-12	3	29-Sep-08	1

General Further Education Tertiary College	Inspection Grade	Inspection date	Previous inspection grade	Inspection date	Total increase or decrease
Bracknell and Wokingham College	3	11-Jun-12	2	08-Oct-07	-1
NCG (formerly Newcastle College Group)	2	28-May-12	1	02-Jun-08	-1
Worcester College of Technology	3	11-May-12	2	01-Jun-09	-1
Northbrook College, Sussex	3	28-May-12	3	23-Feb-09	0
Stoke-on-Trent College	3	28-May-12	2	04-Jun-07	-1
West Nottinghamshire College	2	28-May-12	1	19-May-08	-1
Eastleigh College	1	21-May-12	2	15-May-06	1
Gateshead College	3	14-May-12	1	10-Nov-08	-2
Hereford College of Arts	3	14-May-12	4	28-Mar-11	1
South Thames College	2	14-May-12	2	01-Jun-09	0
Leeds City College	2	14-May-12	n/a	n/a	n/a
Tower Hamlets College	3	30-Apr-12	3	09-Mar-09	0
Barnfield College	3	23-Apr-12	1	04-Jun-12	-2
Stafford College	4	16-Apr-12	2	09-Nov-09	-2
Yeovil College	2	16-Apr-12	3	03-Nov-08	1
Derby College	3	30-Mar-12	2	16-Nov-07	-1
Petroc	2	19-Mar-12	1	09-Oct-07	-1
Derwenside College	2	19-Mar-12	2	22-Sep-08	0
Great Yarmouth College	3	16-Mar-12	4	12-Nov-10	1
North Warwickshire & Hinckley College	2	16-Mar-12	1	29-Oct-07	-1
Kensington & Chelsea College	3	09-Mar-12	2	26-Feb-07	-1
Stratford-upon-Avon College	3	02-Mar-12	2	05-Mar-07	-1
Lewisham College	3	02-Mar-12	1	24-Apr-06	-2
City of Wolverhampton College	4	20-Feb-12	2	10-Dec-07	-2
Lambeth College	4	20-Feb-12	2	25-Feb-08	-2
Macclesfield College	4	20-Feb-12	1	25-Sep-06	-3
Knowsley Community College	4	06-Feb-12	2	25-Feb-08	-2
Brooklands College	3	06-Feb-12	3	05-Oct-09	0
Canterbury College	3	30-Jan-12	3	01-Oct-07	0
South Essex College of Further and Higher Education	3	30-Jan-12	2	12-May-08	-1
Wiltshire College	3	16-Jan-12	3	08-Oct-07	0

	Now		Before	
Grade 1	1	3%	8	27%
Grade 2	8	26%	14	47%
Grade 3	17	55%	6	20%
Grade 4	5	16%	2	7%
	31		30	

FE Week campus roundup

Gloves come off for Amir Khan visit



Boxing world champion and Olympic medallist Amir Khan with Bolton College students

A boxing world champion and Olympic medallist traded punches with Greater Manchester students.

Bolton College sporting excellence students were knocked out when Amir Khan dropped in on their training session.

One of the students put through their paces in the ring by the boxer was Luke Wilkinson, 18. "It was fantastic to have the opportunity to meet Amir Khan and ask for his tips on how to get to the top. As a lad from Bolton, who has become such a successful sportsman,

Amir is a great inspiration to us," he said.

Ben Blocksidge, curriculum leader of sport and public services at the college, said: "It was fantastic to see the students so encouraged by someone who is both a local hero and a worldwide champion. The boxing academy is an example of a true sporting legacy, and Amir is an inspiration to others who are looking to follow in his footsteps."

Bolton College's boxing academy is run in association with the community boxing gym Gloves, which Amir is a patron of.

Volunteer gives up 500 hours of his time



Priestley College student Tom Albiston, 16

A 16-year-old Cheshire student has dedicated more than 500 hours of his time to volunteering in the community.

Tom Albiston has been supporting people with autism, working as a classroom assistant at St Berteline's School, and helping spruce up his local park.

The Priestley College student, who hopes to become a pre-school teacher, was recently awarded 'Superstar' status at his college in recognition of his outstanding contribution to his area.

"I like to keep busy and can't sit at home doing nothing because I just get bored," said

the health and social care student. "It has helped me to build up my confidence and I enjoy helping other people."

Tom, whose older brother is autistic, has been working at the Halton Autistic Family Support Group for two years.

Priestley tutor Sarah Jones said Tom has impressed everyone with his efforts.

"He is such a lovely student and the amount of time he has already given to the community is incredible," she said. "We are supporting him as much as we can because he is putting so much effort into helping others."



Sheffield College student Abbie Ward

sponsored by **empra**

New women's team in a league of their own

A new women's football team is on the scene in Yorkshire.

Thanks to Sheffield College principal Heather Smith's decision to free up Wednesday afternoons on the timetable for sport, students at the Hillsborough campus have been competing against colleges across the country.

The under-19s women's football team, coached by sports lecturer Leanne Taylor, had their best score to date a couple of weeks ago, beating Bradford College 9-3.

Team captain Rebecca Vickers said: "Playing in the league games is a great opportunity for us to enhance our practical skills. I'm really pleased with the team's performance so far.

"We were really on form against Bradford, and by putting their heads together and working hard they made the score 9-3 at the final whistle."

Heather Smith said: "I am delighted that our students now have the opportunity to improve their skills and play to a high standard in competitive sports leagues against regional colleges. This move complements their academic education and enables them to get even more out of our excellent training facilities."

Tough trials at mock court case competition



From left, students Robbie Dobson, 20, Nicole McColgan, 17, Amanda Strong, 18, Nicole Dillon, 18, and Liam Stockton, 16

Cheshire college students played at being barristers, jurors and court staff for the day as they competed in the regional heat of the Bar Mock Trial.

Warrington College was one of 172 schools and colleges taking part.

"We only had a short time to become familiar with the case. Then we had to battle it out in a real courtroom, in front of a real judge," said forensic and public service student Louise Wright, 19.

Performances were scored by circuit judges and senior barristers. Warrington College narrowly missed out on a coveted place in the

final, winning two of their three trials but losing in the last round to the overall winners, St Nicholas Roman Catholic High school.

"I really enjoyed the competition. We won one case as the defence and one as the prosecution but lost our last prosecution case as the judge let the defendant go," said Nicole Dillon, 17, who played the prosecution witness.

"The mock trial competition is an ideal opportunity to see a court and experience the court process. Today has really boosted my confidence and will be a great help in my future career."

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable



From left, Craven Primary school pupils Faith Flowers, 4, Sky Olsson, 4, Aaron Aubrey, 4, Maisie Edwards, 4, Charlie Stretton – Everett, 4, Harvey Kennett, 4, Benjamin Barnett, 4, and Ruby-Leigh Jones, 4

Fairytale furniture for primary school kids

Construction students at a Yorkshire college have come up with a novel idea for children at a local primary school.

Brightly coloured storybook themed furniture was handcrafted for Craven Primary pupils by Hull College students — including a full-sized chair shaped like an open book.

Four-year-old Lacey Blackford could not wait to take a turn sitting in the storybook chair. “I love storytime, it’s my favourite bit of the day,” she said. “My favourite thing is the big chair, but I like the little books too. My favourite kinds of stories are ones about princesses, because I really like princesses.”

The seating is the start of a partnership between the school and the college. Students have already been commissioned to create more items, including a pint-sized kitchen and a wooden train.

College student James Tock, 15, said: “I like that fact that we’re making something for little kids to enjoy; you work harder and take pride in your work when you know it’s really going to be used.”

The primary school got in touch with construction tutor Darren Storrer when his department hit the local headlines for creating a state of the art flight simulation room for the college’s travel and tourism students.



Founder of fashion label Caramel Rock, Faith Johnson (third from right) with students Shojiba Begum, 20, Angella Mullenger, 40, Nosheen Nazir, 28, Jamila Begum, 23, Mergim Hyseni, 17, Mahreen Ahmed, 47, and Emanuella Asante-Bempah, 17

Dragon’s challenge for young entrepreneurs

Business novices at a London college have won over top entrepreneurs at a Dragons’ Den style challenge.

Around 25 Newham College students, some as young as 15, pitched business ideas to improve the community to five judges, including founder of fashion label and social enterprise Caramel Rock, Faith Johnson and chief executive of Social Enterprise UK Peter Holbrook.

“They did well. A little bit of pressure is always good. It was also good to see different people focus on different elements of the business and see their energy and ideas,” said Ms Johnson, who was recently judged to

be one of the three best female entrepreneurs of the year by the London Chamber of Commerce.

The winners were team Re-Store, who proposed a service that collected unwanted furniture, refurbished the items and then sold them.

In the winning team was retail student, Angella Mullenger, from Plaistow. “We were a bit scared but they were nicer than the dragons on television,” she said.

“They gave us information we hadn’t thought about. After the presentation, we felt confident and thought our business idea could work.”

Sparks fly for photography student

A West Midlands student has engineered himself a place in the finals of a national photo competition.

Shane Butler is in with a chance of winning £5,000 worth of Canon photography equipment at manufacturing firm EEF’s Made in Britain Photography Awards.

“I have a real interest in photographing anything that’s a bit quirky and slightly different from the norm, so really enjoyed taking part in this competition and I am delighted to have made it through to the final,” said the 19-year-old Walsall College student.

Budding photographers were asked to take a snapshot of a product or component invented in the UK. Shane’s shortlisted photographs were taken at manufacturing firm Chamberlin and Hill, based in Walsall.

“I chose Chamberlin and Hill as they have a great facility that gave me the opportunity to experiment with light, shade and reflections,” he said.

Photography lecturer Ian Male said: “Shane is a very talented photographer with a great future ahead of him and we wish him the best of luck in the competition.”



A member of staff at manufacturing firm Chamberlin and Hill – One of the photos that got student Shane Butler into the finals of the Made in Britain Photography Awards.

Dark Knights keep Manchester streets safe



From left, PC Powell from Heywood Police Station with Laura Kirkham, 18, Olivia Wright-Norton, 17, and Lloyd Bailey, 18

Uniformed public service students have been helping fight crime in Greater Manchester.

Hopwood Hall College students joined police on patrol and gave tips to the community on keeping their houses safe as part of the force’s Dark Knights Campaign to cut down on burglary. The students, who have been studying the effects of crime, also handed out free lights that can be set to a timer to make homes safer.

“This valuable experience has enriched our students’ academic study. It is one thing for me to talk about crime prevention in the classroom but quite another for them to actually do it,” said their lecturer John Hall.

“They all found it rewarding and wanted more. What’s more, the feedback I have received from the police was excellent and we hope that our learners can participate in future initiatives.”

FE Week campus roundup

sponsored by **empra**

Making history with Jubilee time capsule



Coleg Gwent staff and students meet the Queen

A Welsh college made history when its video was chosen to be part of a time capsule presented to the Queen to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee.

The film made by Coleg Gwent independent living skills (ILS) students was one of 60 contributions to the capsule from 80,000 entries to the Royal Commonwealth Society.

The collection — the world’s biggest global digital archive of stories and memories —was presented to Her Majesty at a ceremony in London.

“We are thrilled to be part of history in the

making, and to be presented to the Queen on such a wonderful occasion in her special Jubilee year,” said ILS tutor Victoria English.

“We were very proud to represent Coleg Gwent on such an amazing day. Students feel privileged to have had some brilliant insights into the lives and achievements of very well-known people in Wales, and we’re grateful to all of them for taking part with us. It’s been wonderful to record and share their stories and be involved in something original and creative to celebrate the Jubilee.”

Over the moon about space Olympics



Derby College student Abbie Singleton, 16

An East Midlands student has competed against more than 200 people from around the world at the International Space Olympics in Russia.

Abbie Singleton, 16, was one of 30 young people in Team GB who were tested on their knowledge of space exploration.

“I had a fantastic time — meeting all sorts of people from different countries, visiting some of the landmarks in Russia and learning a great deal about the Russian space programme which was fascinating,” said the Derby College A-level student.

“The top prizes went to Russian students who have won every year since the programme

started and my presentation category was particularly tough as I was up against American students who had benefited from special tutoring and input from the NASA team.

“The build-up and preparation seemed to go on for ever and I worked really hard to get everything ready, but the trip itself went really quickly and I can’t believe it is all over.”

As well as written exams in physics, maths and creative writing at the Space Olympics, Abbie gave a presentation on how the planet Mars could be adapted to cater for human life and was placed fifth out of 22 in the astro physics category.

College exhibition to showcase local artistic talent

Kent’s top artists will be showing off their work to the public when Canterbury College hosts this year’s John Millest Art Show.

The free exhibition will feature work from current and former students and staff, as well as other local artists. Students will also be competing for their work to win the public vote to pocket £200.

Ex-college student Peter Whittlesea from BBC South East will open the show.

Art tutor Clive Soord, who is also part of the John Millest Trust, said: “This year we’ve opened the competition up to non-Canterbury College artists in order to involve the wider community. It’s a great chance for artists to show their art and gives many students their first experience of selling their work.”

All money raised from selling artwork will go to the John Millest Trust, which funds art studies within the college. The Trust was set up after the death in 1994 of John Millest, a popular and much respected lecturer in art and history of art at the college. It was his wish that any commemoration of him should benefit students.



From left, art tutors Clive Soord and Nikolas Glancy prepare the art exhibition

Hollywood hero gives tips to budding stars



BAFTA award winning actor, writer and director Justin Chadwick talks to Central Sussex College students

Budding actors and directors picked the brains of a Hollywood star when he came to talk at a South East college.

BAFTA award winning actor, writer and director Justin Chadwick gave Central Sussex College’s sixth-form students top tips for success and discussed his new film *Mandela: The Long Walk to Freedom*, due out next year.

Drama and film student Lee Bubb, 16, from Chelwood Gate, said: “Justin was an inspiration. He is proof that someone like me can follow a dream and become a film director. He has actually really spurred me on to work hard so that I can do something that I really want to do when I’m older.”

Subject leader for theatre studies, Paula Watkins, who organised the visit, said: “It is really important that students understand the nature of what is a very competitive industry. Justin gave them a very honest insight into the highs and lows of the television and film world and valuable advice on how to be successful.”

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

The UK's first WorldSkills competitor shares his story

Who would have thought a careers event attracting thousands of young people to Birmingham would have roots leading to a Spanish dictator's palace?

As organisers of this year's Skills Show UK revealed 70,000 people attended the three-day event, the UK's first WorldSkills competitor told *FE Week* of the show's beginnings.

Doug Hill, now aged 77, was just a teenager when he went to Madrid and met dictator General Franco after winning silver in a woodworking competition. The experience led his father, Frederick, to push British people to compete in WorldSkills shows in Europe before the UK held its own event.

"Of course I didn't know anything about politics — I was just a carpenter who wanted to prove to my father I was a good cabinet maker," said Mr Hill.

It was 1953 and a young Mr Hill was working as an apprentice sharpening saws at his father's factory workshop in Canterbury.

"One day I saw a leaflet in the library for a competition and I told my father I was a skilled workman. He thought it was a good idea and took me across to the continent.

"It was frightening going to Madrid. I kept expecting to meet other British competitors but I was the only one. I couldn't understand what anyone was saying but I could follow the instructions and drawings. "

The teenager won a silver medal that was presented at Franco's palace.

"The palace was beautiful and I shook Franco's hand but, at the time, I didn't realise he

was a dictator.

"One minute I was planing a piece of wood in Canterbury and the next I was in this huge competition and then a palace — it was awe-inspiring," he said.

Mr Hill's father, who was heavily involved with the Scouts movement, thought the competition was a great idea and talked to as many officials as he could in Spain. When he came home he contacted big businesses such as Rolls-Royce and City & Guilds, but many didn't want to know because of the awkward political situation with Spain.

"My father realised it wasn't about politics but about the boys and the chance to prove themselves through competition. He got together a team and took them to Europe with his own money to compete."

He said City & Guilds finally got on board and put on a UK Skills Show in the 1960s.

"I'm very proud of what he created and it's been fantastic to see all the young people here at this year's UK skills show. Apprenticeships are very important," said Mr Hill, who went on to have a successful noticeboard company.

This year's Skills Show, held at Birmingham's NEC last month, provided information and inspiration on vocational training to 70,738 attendees, organisers said.

More than 60 "Have a Go" areas allowed visitors to try out a new skill while more than 50 talks were held on different vocational skills.

Mr Hill said he still gave talks to the Chamber of Commerce on the importance of apprenticeships.



Doug Hill: "I couldn't understand what anyone was saying but I could follow the instructions and drawings."



From left, learning adviser Joanna Aynsworth receives her award from bestselling author Adele Parks Photo: Tom Parkes

Campaign helps learners 'discover reading'

Northampton college has been given a trophy for helping improve adult literacy.

Learning adviser Joanna Aynsworth at Moulton College was presented with the bronze award by bestselling novelist Adele Parks at the Six Book Challenge in recognition of her work helping 64 adults get back into reading.

"I've met hundreds of emergent adult readers in libraries, workplaces and in learning centres during my time as Ambassador for the Six Book Challenge and I've found the experience extremely humbling," said Adele Parks.

"It's been a pleasure watching people discover reading for the first time and I've encountered a lot of under-confident and disadvantaged

people who, by improving their reading skills, have drastically improved their opportunities in life."

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock spoke at the event celebrating the fifth year of the scheme, which lets unconfident readers pick six books of their choice and record what they think in a diary.

"I welcome The Reading Agency's campaign which is not only helping people to learn to read, but also giving them a desire to read. By improving the literacy and numeracy skills of the nation, we can transform people's prospects, create a more highly skilled workforce and boost economic growth," he said.

Mobile phone app wins trip to New York



Founder of Pants to Poverty Ben Ramsden, principal of Lewisham College Maxine Room, head of HE at North Hertfordshire College and competition organiser Rifaat Foufa, project liaison at Market Maker Ronan Donohue, chief executive of Welcome Gate Jason Choy

East Midlands students have beaten off stiff competition from more than 160 college teams from across the country to win a trip to New York after impressing judges in a Dragon's Den-style business competition.

The team of three New College Nottingham students pitched their idea for a mobile phone app that safeguards children to a panel of business experts at the Institute of Directors' head office in London.

Construction students Darryl Whitworth, Austin Watson and Matt Newton, came up with a special transmitter that can be attached to a child in the form of a watch, hair bobble or shoe laces, and alerts the user if the child leaves a

predetermined distance from the mobile phone.

"It's still sinking in that we have actually won. There were so many fantastic business ideas that I never dreamt we would get this far," said Darryl.

"I've enjoyed the whole experience. Working together with my two team mates to come up with our concept has been great and I'm looking forward to progressing our idea further."

The winning team will travel to New York next year to present their idea to an American judging panel and will be in with the chance to win \$100,000 as capital for their business.

The MarketMaker Experience competition was sponsored by the Gazelle Group.

FE Week event

What journalists really want

Shane Mann
@shanermann

What do journalists look for? How do we make further education stories hit the headlines?

These were two questions that colleges, government agencies and PR professionals from across country wanted answers to when they descended on King's College, London, late last month.

What Journalists Want, organised by The Last Word, is a one-day conference that provides press, communications and marketing professionals in the sector with an overview of the kind of stories journalists are interested in – and how to approach them.

Sessions were led by Lucy Sherriff, education correspondent for the Huffington Post, Jeevan Vasagar, former education editor at The Guardian, and BBC producer Kirsty Pope.

FE Week editor Nick Linford talked about building relationships with specialist journalists. He provided delegates with an insight into the schedules of FE Week and shared examples of the types of stories that his publication would and would not publish.

“At FE Week we are looking for stories that our readers are going to want to read. That is not unique; it's the same at any newspaper. I would argue that this is one of the first things to remember when thinking of sending a story anywhere. Who is their intended audience?”

“There are four areas to the newspaper that you can contribute towards: news, profiles, expert articles and campus roundup.

“Campus roundup is an opportunity for organisations to showcase good news from the sector. This can be anything from a royal visit, a student receiving an award or commendation for their work, or the opening of a new building.

“If you have a story, pick up the phone”

“What is essential with any campus roundup though is that we receive a relevant high resolution photograph. If the Queen pays you a visit, we want a front-facing picture to accompany the story. Not a picture of Her Majesty's back.”

Linford's final message to delegates was simple — “if you have a story, pick up the phone.”

“Too often journalists find out about a story too late, at a time when it is no longer newsworthy to publish. Of course not every story is time sensitive. But to send through a press release regarding an award that was received over a month ago and expect to get the interest from the journalist is not realistic.



Nick Linford: “At FE Week, we are looking for stories that our readers are going to want to read.”

“As soon as you have or think you have a story, get in touch.”

The Last Word was established over seven years ago by journalists Janet Murray and

Louise Tickle and specialises in training events and masterclasses for communications professionals in the education and not-for-profit sectors.



The seminar took place in Committee room 17 in the House of Commons

Pictures by Shane Mann

WRITING THE PERFECT Campus Roundup



So, your college has won an award, broken a record, had a famous visitor, raised money and awareness or opened a new building, and now you want to get your story in FE Week's Campus Roundup. Here's our quick guide to getting your tale on our pages

The press release

Press releases need to include:

- A selection of quotes - ideally from staff and students
- As much information as possible on the event - i.e, if money raised how much? How many people attended?

The story can't be too old or it won't be newsworthy enough to put in the paper. Send your stories in as soon as possible after the event to make sure they have a chance of being published.

The picture

A high-res jpeg picture, with the following conditions, must accompany any submitted pieces.

- The picture must always include people relevant to the article and be free for us to use
- It should also have full details about those pictured, including students' names, ages and course details
- Where staff are pictured, we need to know who they are and what their job is
- These details are not required when it's a group of more than 10 - however, pictures of large groups are less likely to appear in the paper
- Ideally, submit at least one portrait and one landscape picture
- Where a picture is taken by a student, we will happily give them a named credit where requested if their full details, as mentioned above, are included
- Pictures of people being handed cheques, standing shaking hands or holding awards are less favourable than active pictures
- For example, if a carpentry student has won an award, a picture of them in their workshop posing for the camera as they show an interested principal how to chisel a piece of wood is much better than just holding an award
- If you've got a new building, get the architect outside it showing students and staff the plans/pointing out features. The same applies for renovations, old buildings, etc
- Make sure your picture is well lit. If it is too dark, it won't print well and may not be included
- Consider hiring a professional photographer or, better yet, if you have a photography course, get a learner to take the picture

Don't be disheartened if your story doesn't get printed in the paper. If it didn't make the cut it could be because the photo wasn't good enough or the story was too old to be news worthy. Or we might just be saving it for another week.

If you want some tips on how to get your next story in the paper then just email news@feweek.co.uk with any questions.



↪ Example of a good picture

↪ Examples of bad pictures



Resolution too low



Don't photoshop your images



Image too dark



Don't crop the images before you send them

FE Week event

Learner voices at heart of 157 Group report

Holly Welham

@hollywelham

Politicians, principals and experts gathered in Westminster to hear how a Gloucestershire college helped to transform the life of a student with autism.

Charlie Avent, 24, told the audience how no one seemed to understand his autism at school, but when he joined Ruskin Mill College a teacher introduced him to her horse, sparking a love of horsemanship that has helped him to manage his behaviour.

"I don't have learning difficulties, I had teaching difficulties," said Charlie.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock, who joined shadow minister Gordon Marsden for the 157 Group reception, tweeted that Charlie's speech had been "brilliant".

The 157 Group launched its Finding My Voice report at the event — a collection of stories on how colleges have supported students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Alison Boulton, chief executive of Natspec, an association for independent specialist colleges for students with disabilities, and Lynne Sedgmore, executive director of the 157 Group,

write in the forward that the voices of learners are key to understanding how colleges can offer the best support.

"The traditional wisdom says that policymakers make policy and practitioners implement it. We believe that it does not have to be that way and seek, through publications like this, to allow the real experiences of learners to influence those who make policy decisions," they said.

The group, which represents the top colleges in the country, also launched a review of its impact over the past year.

"We are delighted that nearly 200 people joined us to celebrate the achievements of the

157 Group," said Ms Sedgmore.

"It was especially good to hear from one of the learners featured in Finding My Voice, Charlie Avent, who spoke passionately about his work with horses and the way his college experience had helped him to be successful.

"We are building a reputation for sound and innovative thought leadership, and we continue to contribute to the raising of the reputation of FE as a whole."

With permission from the 157 Group we have included Charlie's story below, as written by Janet Murray in Finding My Voice.

‘For the first time in my life, I feel I can have my say’

I didn't get on well in mainstream education. Reading and writing was a struggle for me, but my teachers didn't seem to understand my difficulties. Their constant criticism made me angry and confrontational, so it was difficult to make friends.

The kids at school didn't seem to like me: they'd just beat me up and call me names. I felt completely isolated, as if I were in a foreign country where no one understood my language. By the age of 15, I was losing the will to live.

I did try riding as a child, but autism makes you very sensitive to the world around you and I was often panicky around the horses. Looking back, I realise I was freaked out by the violence of it all, particularly seeing horses being whipped, but I just wasn't able to articulate those feelings at the time. I'd just freak out or have panic attacks.

I was moved to a special school at 15, and then on to Ruskin Mill College at 19. But despite having greater freedom, I still struggled to fit in at college. Then my art teacher Patricia introduced me to her horse, Oscar, and everything changed.

When I first saw Oscar, it was like meeting a long lost member of the family. I knew instinctively that I wanted to understand more about how horses communicate. Having noticed my enthusiasm, staff at Ruskin Mill College arranged for me to do work experience at Heartshore Horses, a centre for natural horsemanship near Minchinhampton in the Cotswolds.

Dawn, who owns the stables, introduced me to the concept of natural horsemanship, explaining how horses communicate through their movement and gestures. If you know what you're looking for, you can tell if a horse is happy, sad, in love – or even if they like you.

In all, I had 18 months of weekly work experience and learning natural horsemanship at Heartshore. When I left Ruskin Mill College, I asked Dawn if I could stay on doing regular volunteer work at the stables, which I have been doing ever since.

I knew early on that I wanted my own horse, but had no idea how I would afford the livery. After talking it through with Dawn, she said I

could keep a horse at Heartshore in exchange for helping out at the stables a few days a week.

In natural horsemanship, your horse chooses you, not the other way round. As soon as I saw Spirit, she lowered her head and pawed the ground, which was a very clear sign that she was the horse for me. When your horse chooses you, it is a very powerful moment and I decided then that I wanted to use my interest to help raise awareness of autism.

Since then, I've continued to work part time at Heartshore and have started giving demonstrations in natural horsemanship to children and young people with autism. Last year, I gave a talk at the Natspec conference about autism – something I'd never have done before I started working with horses.

When you're on the autistic spectrum, it's like your brain is on a different operating system from other people's; if you compare the brain to a computer, it's like the difference between Apple and Windows 7.

Thanks to the help of staff at Ruskin Mill College and Dawn and my colleagues at Heartshore, I now have a much better understanding of myself, which means I am far more able to control my behaviour. I've learned that no one listens when you're ranting and raving, which means I am far less likely to flare up like I used to.

I'm 24 now, and when I look back on my teenage years, I can see why I was angry. I felt I had no voice and no choice. I'm sure a lot of young people – and not just those on the autistic spectrum – feel like that.

Young people's interests are their strength, and if we could develop a system that helped young people pursue their passions, instead of trying to educate everyone in the same way, I'm sure we could reduce anti social behaviour and underachievement.

I used to think of autism as a disorder, but my experiences have taught me that being on the autism spectrum is a disability only if you perceive it that way. Imagine an axe: in the wrong hands it can be destructive, but if used in the right way, it can create beautiful things. That's how I see autism now. And for the first time in my life, I feel I can have my say.



Marilyn Hawkins, former 157 Group chair (2011-12) displaying this year's 157 group publications



Charlie Avent, with his horse, Spirit



Matthew Hancock, further education minister



Gordon Marsden, shadow further education minister



Baroness Margaret Wall of High Barnet



Peter Roberts, Principal Leeds City College and newly elected chairperson of 157 Group



From left: Liz Shannon UCU, Charlie Avent, Lynne Sedgmore 157 Group, Helen Casey Institute of Education



Christine Doubleday, 157 Group, and Andy Gannon, 157 Group



Maggie Galliers, President of the AoC and Melanie Hunt, Principal of Sussex Downs College



From left: Sally Ross, Jade Cassidy, Ruth Gilbert, Janet Murray, Beatrix Groves and Sue Crowley

FE Week Jobs

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You will be a key member of our College Management Team and play a vital role in developing the CIS function in support of our rapidly developing college. You will have the knowledge and experience develop and maintain information and planning system and your input will enhance the efficiency, clarity and accuracy of management information.

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To meet the challenge you'll need to have at least 3 years experience of working in information services within Further Education or a very similar environment and a proven track record in a management or leadership role. You will possess a high level of self-motivation, organisational skills and be an excellent communicator. A degree-level qualification would be desirable, as would a management qualification.

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Head of Business Apprenticeships

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As a successful Senior Manager, you will be fully conversant with the world of work based learning either within a private training provider or a college environment, and will demonstrate experience of the funding, compliance and quality landscape of the Adult Skills Budget, specifically Apprenticeships.

If you are interested in the role, please send your CV and a covering letter to **louise.timperley@kaplan.co.uk** by the deadline of midday on **Monday 14 January 2013**.

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To apply, please visit www.otleycollege.ac.uk
Closing date: Midday, 17 December 2012.

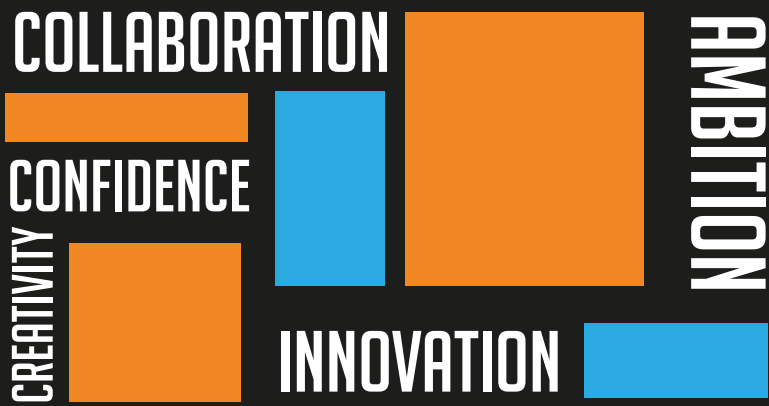
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Interview date: **16th January 2013**



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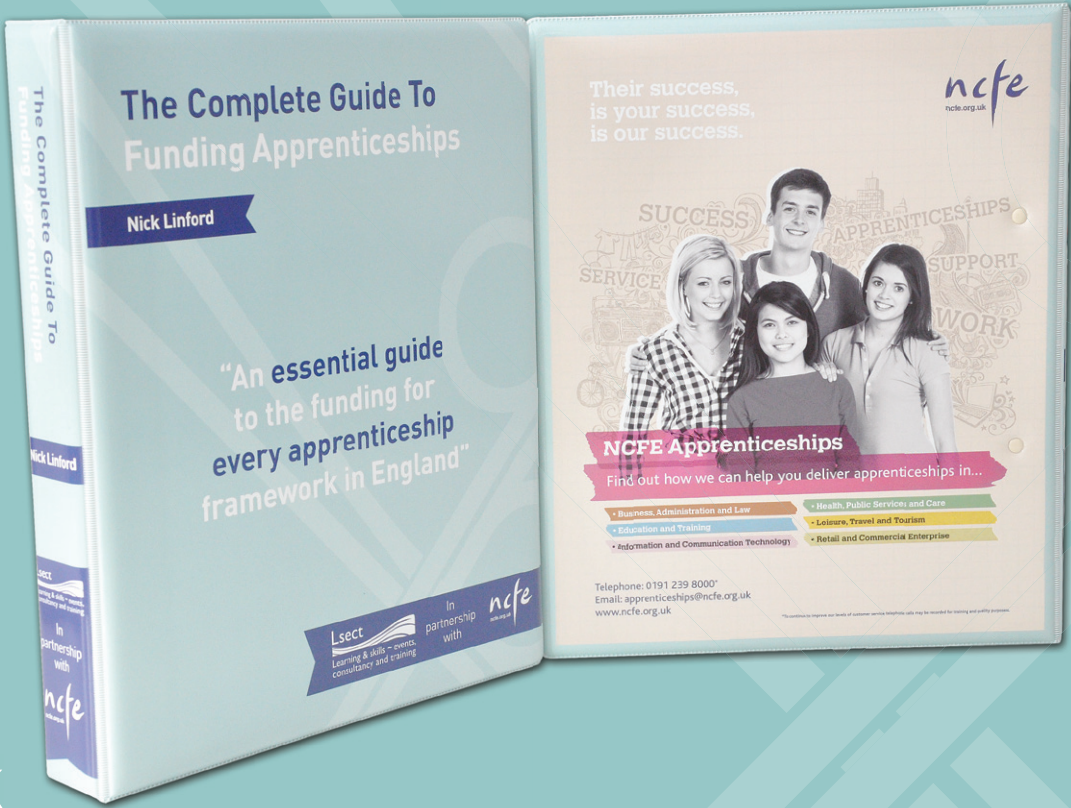


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FE Week Sudoku challenge

5		8	9		7			1
				2				3
	2	7	8	3				6
		1	4		6			2
	6	5				8	9	
8			2		9	6		
3				1	5	2	7	
9				4				
1			7		2	3		8

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

8		1				5		4
	7		9	8	2		3	
1			3		6			2
		3		7		9		8
2		6	5		8			1
	6		4	2	5		1	
9		4				2		3

Last Week's solutions

9	2	7	8	6	4	1	5	3
5	6	1	7	2	3	8	4	9
3	8	4	9	1	5	7	6	2
4	7	8	1	5	2	9	3	6
1	9	3	6	4	8	5	2	7
6	5	2	3	9	7	4	8	1
7	4	5	2	3	1	6	9	8
8	3	9	5	7	6	2	1	4
2	1	6	4	8	9	3	7	5

Difficulty:
EASY

4	3	5	1	9	6	2	8	7
8	1	9	7	5	2	3	6	4
7	6	2	8	3	4	1	9	5
9	2	1	6	4	8	5	7	3
6	4	7	5	2	3	8	1	9
3	5	8	9	7	1	6	4	2
2	9	6	3	8	7	4	5	1
1	7	3	4	6	5	9	2	8
5	8	4	2	1	9	7	3	6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I've been sharing my gingerbread snowman with baby brother Thomas"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford